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ABSTRACT

The Texas School Survey of Substance Abuse, which has been administered twice, and which covered grades seven through twelve, was expanded for the 1990 survey to encompass grades four to six. The students were surveyed on their use of tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, and marijuana. The most widely used substances were alcohol and tobacco, with inhalants third in prevalence and marijuana fourth. Substance use is lower in grades four through six than in secondary grades, with younger students about one-half as likely to report experimentation with alcohol and inhalants and almost one-third as likely to have used tobacco. Secondary students are about ten times more likely to have used marijuana than elementary grade students. Grade level, ethnicity, urbanicity, gender, academic performance, and family structure are all associated with the use of drugs or alcohol by elementary students. The sixth grade in particular marks a substantial increase in substance use compared to fourth and fifth grades; over one-half of sixth-graders have tried alcohol. Although prevalence in the elementary grades seemed quite low compared to secondary students, many students are first exposed to drugs and alcohol in elementary school. Interestingly, survey results indicate that fourth and fifth graders actually receive more education about substance use than sixth graders, with schools seeming to concentrate on early prevention programs. This may be a questionable strategy since widespread experimentation seems to begin in sixth grade. (CC)

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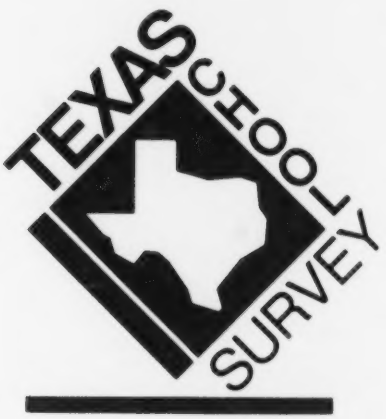
1990 TEXAS SCHOOL SURVEY OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE



ADDENDUM:
GRADE 4 - 6 DATA

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Texas Commission on
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A number of staff members of the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the Public Policy Resources Laboratory of Texas A&M University contributed to the 1990 school survey and the production of this volume. Particular recognition should go to Eric V. Fredlund, Ph.D., and Jennifer Kavinsky, M.A., of TCADA, and James Dyer, Ph.D., and Dottie Carmichael, M.P.A., of PPRL, who were the principal authors of this work.

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The Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) is a state agency governed by nine Governor-appointed commissioners. TCADA provides educational materials on substance use, develops prevention, intervention and treatment programs, and conducts studies on the problems of substance abuse in Texas.

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INTRODUCTION

During the spring of 1990, the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), in conjunction with the Public Policy Resources Laboratory (PPRL) at Texas A&M University, administered the second statewide assessment of substance use among public school students in Texas. In that year the Texas School Survey was expanded to encompass grades four through six, and this report presents the findings of that elementary survey. Because the statewide Texas School Survey was not administered in elementary grades in the past, comparison data is not available from 1988. However, this year's data will provide a basis for longitudinal comparisons in future years.

This report is an addendum to the *1990 Texas School Survey of Substance Use*, which covered grades seven through twelve. The full report provides a more complete discussion of technical issues such as sampling error, the limitations of self-reported data, and the populations to which survey findings can appropriately be generalized, so these issues are not discussed in detail here. Additional coverage of many technical issues will be provided in a separate technical report.

The Texas School Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use is funded under U.S. Department of Education Drug Free Schools and Communities block grant. The purpose of the project is to support drug and alcohol program planning by informing state and local policymakers about the substance abuse problem in Texas schools. The statewide survey also provides a standard of comparison for districts conducting local drug and alcohol assessments.

Survey Instrument and Administration

Elementary survey results are based on data collected from a sample of 27,122 students randomly selected from school districts throughout the state using a multi-stage probability design. Data from an additional 80,911 students participating in local administrations was included as well, bringing the total sample size to 108,033 (Figure 1).

Two versions of the survey instrument were developed for the Texas School Survey. The first was a six-page questionnaire designed for students in grades six through twelve. The second was a simplified three-page instrument created for students in grades four and five. Because comparability of the two instruments was preserved, sixth grade results could be integrated with those from fourth and fifth graders in order to create the elementary report.

The elementary survey differed from the secondary version in that it was shorter, the language was simplified, and some complex questions were omitted. Elementary students were asked about only four types of substances: (1) tobacco including cigarettes and snuff or chewing tobacco; (2) alcohol including beer, wine or wine coolers, and liquor; (3) inhalants; and (4) marijuana. They were asked about their use of these substances during their lifetime, the past school year, and prior to the

	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	TOTAL
TOTAL SAMPLE	38,822	36,986	32,225	108,033
SEX				
Male	19,047	18,265	15,377	52,689
Female	19,824	18,686	16,834	55,344
RACE/ETHNICITY				
White	20,998	19,561	12,124	52,682
Black	6,147	6,177	6,987	19,312
Hispanic	10,414	10,149	11,075	31,638
Other	1,380	1,241	1,780	4,401
POPULATION DENSITY				
Largest Metro Areas	19,518	18,285	20,610	58,414
Rest of State	19,303	18,700	11,615	49,619
USUAL GRADES				
A's	17,382	14,582	9,430	41,393
B's	16,184	15,590	14,580	46,354
C's	4,104	5,134	5,690	14,928
D's	937	1,116	1,384	3,437
F's	502	728	691	1,921
FAMILY STRUCTURE				
Live With Both Parents	27,789	26,013	20,787	74,589
Other Family Structures	11,085	11,033	11,327	33,444
AGE				
8 or younger	41	9	0	50
Age 9	9,774	25	0	9,799
Age 10	24,608	8,652	0	33,261
Age 11	4,245	22,776	6,648 *	33,669
Age 12	301	5,195	18,154	23,649
Age 13 or older	32	433	7,140	7,605

Fig 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Grade 4 - 6 Sample, 1990

* Because sixth graders used the secondary survey instrument, the lowest age option for this group was 11 or younger.

past school year. Unlike secondary students, they were not asked about their use during the thirty days prior to the survey.

The questionnaire was an optically scanned form similar to that used for achievement and other types of testing. It was designed for self administration by students with the aid of a staff member to pass out and take up the instruments, read a common set of instructions, and monitor the class during survey administration.

Terminology

In this report, the collective term "elementary students" refers to those in grades four through six.

In this report, the term "illicit drugs" refers to substances scheduled under the Controlled Substances Act, which excludes tobacco, alcohol, and inhalants. However, when considering youth statistics it is important to remember that purchase and possession of alcohol by those 21 and under is illegal, as is the purchase of tobacco and some inhalants by those under 18.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The sixth grade marks a substantial increase in both lifetime and past school year substance use compared to fourth and fifth grades.
- Females in sixth grade, unlike those in fourth or fifth grade, have a past school year substance use rate as high as males, indicating that females are particularly prone to try substances in sixth grade.
- As with secondary students, fourth through sixth graders who make A's and B's are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs than those who make C's, D's, and F's.
- About 25 percent of fourth and fifth graders have had two or more drinks in a row at least once.
- Only 90 percent of sixth graders (compared to 97 percent of fourth graders, 98 percent of fifth graders, and 92 percent of seventh graders) say they have received information about substance use from a school source.
- Hispanic students generally have higher rates for past school year substance use than either Black or White students.
- 31 percent of fourth graders, 39 percent of fifth graders, and 57 percent of sixth graders have drunk alcohol; 21 percent of fourth graders, 28 percent of fifth graders, and 38 percent of sixth graders drank alcohol during the past school year.
- 13 percent of fourth graders, 20 percent of fifth graders, and 31 percent of sixth graders have used tobacco; 8 percent of fourth graders, 13 percent of fifth graders, and 19 percent of sixth graders used tobacco during the past school year.
- 13 percent of fourth graders, 10 percent of fifth graders, and 24 percent of sixth graders have sniffed inhalants; 3 percent of fourth graders, 4 percent of fifth graders, and 8 percent of sixth graders sniffed inhalants during the past school year.
- 1 percent of fourth graders, 2 percent of fifth graders, and 5 percent of sixth graders have used marijuana; less than 1 percent of fourth graders, 1 percent of fifth graders, and 4 percent of sixth graders used marijuana during the past school year.

OVERVIEW OF SUBSTANCE USE BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TEXAS

As with secondary students, the most widely used substances among elementary students are alcohol and tobacco (Figure 2). Inhalants are third in prevalence and marijuana was used by relatively few younger students. As would be expected, substance use is lower in grades four through six than in grades seven through twelve (Figure 3). Younger students are about one-half as likely to report lifetime prevalence of alcohol (40 percent vs. 81 percent secondary) and inhalants (14 percent vs. 23 percent secondary). They are almost one-third as likely to have ever used tobacco (20 percent vs. 56 percent secondary). Use of marijuana shows the largest disparity between elementary and secondary student substance use. Secondary students (23 percent) are about ten times more likely to have used marijuana during their lifetime than students in elementary grades (2 percent).

Sub-group differences among fourth through sixth graders generally mirrored those of secondary students. Grade-level, ethnicity, urbanicity, gender, academic performance, and family structure are all associated with the use of drugs and alcohol by elementary students.

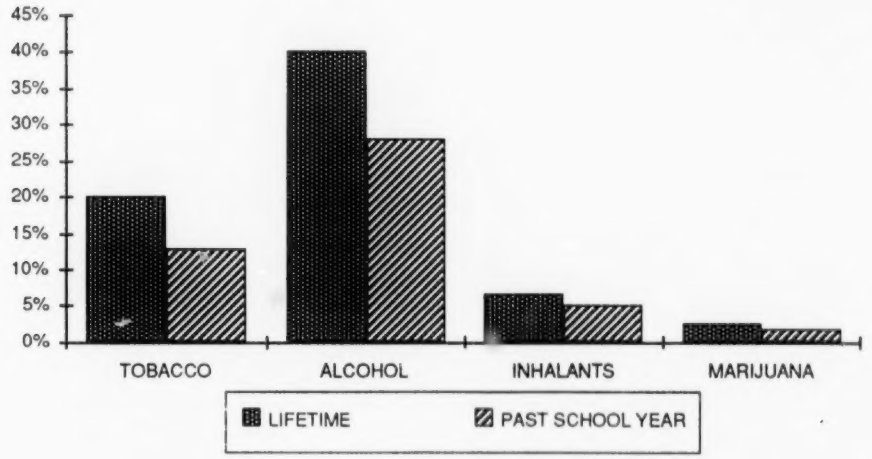
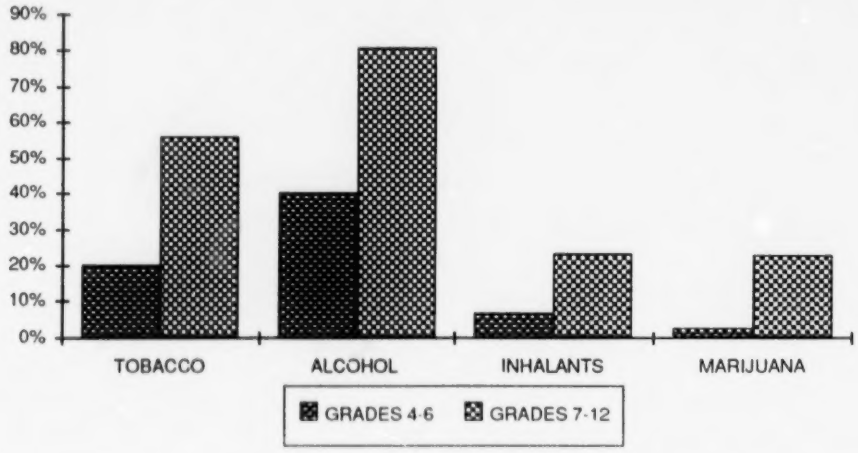


Fig 2 Substance Use by Elementary Students, 1990 (Grades 4 - 6)

Grade Level

As with secondary students, substance use among elementary students is related to grade level. For all substances, a large increase in prevalence (lifetime and past school year) occurs between fifth and sixth grades, an indication that many students begin experimentation in the sixth grade (Figure 4). No other grade progression shows such a prominent increase in substance use. There are a number

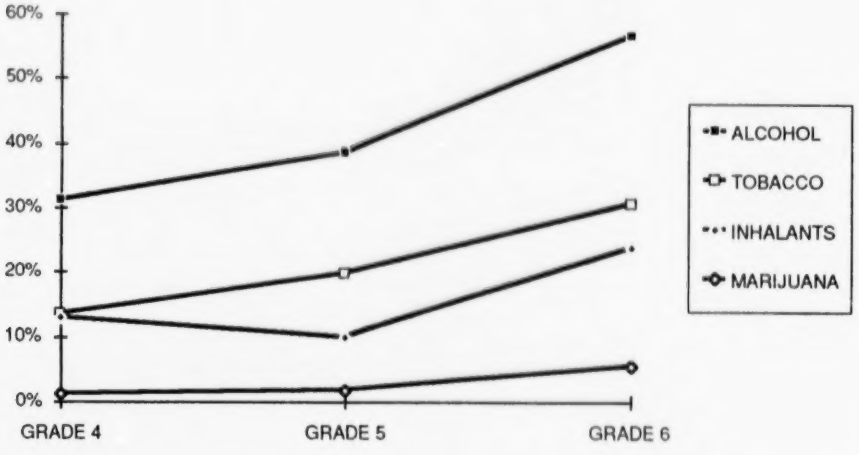
Fig 3 Lifetime Substance Use, Elementary and Secondary Students, 1990



of reasons which may account for the sharp increase in sixth grade prevalence. In many districts sixth graders are integrated into high school campuses, which increases their exposure to the many substances used by older students. Sixth grade students are also increasingly independent, and subsequently more inclined to experiment than younger students.

Lifetime prevalence of alcohol and tobacco increases from year to year among elementary students. Lifetime alcohol prevalence climbed from 31 to 39 percent between fourth and fifth grade, then jumped to 57 percent among sixth graders. Lifetime prevalence of tobacco rose from 13 percent to 20 percent between grades four and five, reaching 31 percent among sixth graders. Lifetime inhalant and marijuana use, on the other hand, remained low in fourth and fifth grade, then increased sharply in the sixth grade. Inhalant use was about 13 percent lifetime for fourth graders, dropped to 10 percent for fifth graders, but then more than doubled to 24 percent among sixth graders. Lifetime marijuana use was under 2 percent for fourth and fifth graders, then rose to over 5 percent among sixth graders.

Fig 4 Lifetime Substance Use, Elementary Students by Grade, 1990



Race/Ethnicity

Overall, elementary students from each ethnic group reported approximately equal lifetime prevalence of alcohol (40 percent White, 41 percent Black and Hispanic). Lifetime tobacco prevalence was about the same for White and Hispanic respondents (22 percent), but only about one-half as many Blacks (13 percent) said they had ever tried tobacco. Marijuana consumption was higher among Hispanic students. Four percent of elementary Hispanics used marijuana during their lifetime compared to about 2 percent of Blacks and Whites. Lifetime inhalant use was higher among Blacks and Hispanics (around 16 percent) than Whites (12 percent).

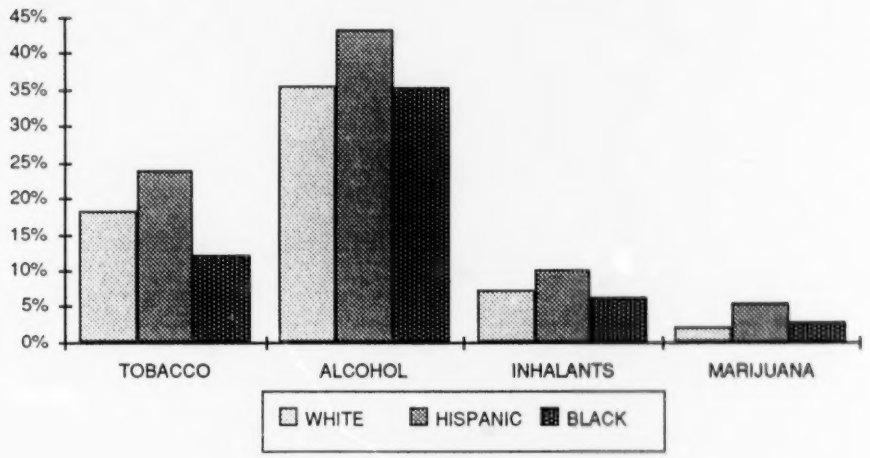


Fig 5 Past School Year Substance Use, Sixth Graders by Race, 1990

The data indicates that more recent substance use (i.e., during the past school year) is slightly greater among Hispanics than other ethnic groups. The trend is particularly visible among sixth graders where prevalence is highest (Figure 5). For example, 31 percent of all elementary Hispanic students and 43 percent of Hispanic sixth graders said they had drank alcohol since school began in September. In contrast, only 27 percent of Black and White elementary students and 35 percent of Black and White sixth graders had drunk that recently. About 7 percent of Black and White sixth graders used inhalants during the past school year, yet among Hispanics that figure rises to 10 percent. Marijuana use during the past school year was reported by 5 percent of Hispanic sixth graders compared to 2 percent of Whites and 3 percent of Blacks.

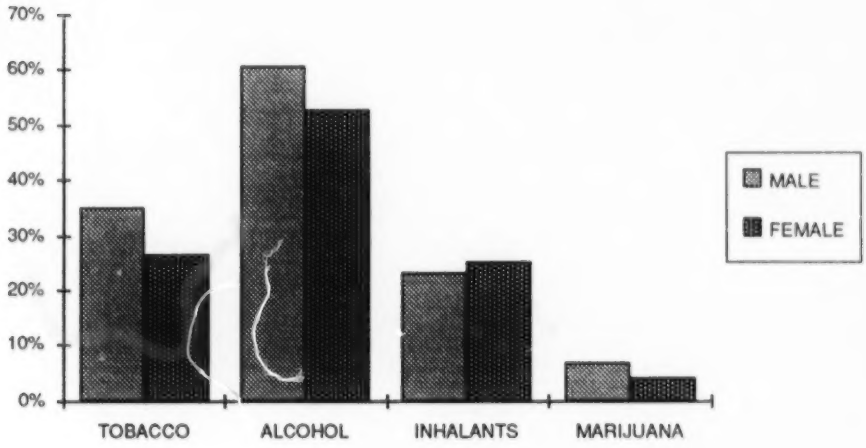
Gender

Gender differences among elementary students are generally the same as those of secondary students. Overall, males report greater lifetime and past school year prevalence of virtually every substance. Twenty-six percent of male elementary students say they have used tobacco at least once in their lifetime compared to 15 percent of females. Forty-six percent of male elementary students report lifetime prevalence of alcohol while only 34 percent of females have ever drunk. Somewhat

more males have also used inhalants (16 percent) and marijuana (3 percent) than have females (13 percent and 2 percent respectively).

When students reach sixth grade, past school year prevalence among female students is much closer to that of males. For example, a substantial difference in lifetime alcohol prevalence exists between sixth grade males and females (61 percent versus 53 percent), yet almost the same percentage of males (38 percent) and females (37 percent) drank during the past school year. Similarly, while sixth grade males (7 percent) report higher lifetime marijuana prevalence than females (4 percent), equal percentages of both sexes say they have use marijuana since school began in September (4 percent) (Figures 6 and 7).

Fig 6 Lifetime Substance Use, Male and Female Sixth Graders, 1990



This pattern indicates that a large percentage of female students are using substances for the first time in sixth grade, which raises their past school year prevalence to the same level as males. However, the total number of females who have ever used drugs or alcohol still remains lower than for males, resulting in lower lifetime prevalence rates for female sixth graders than for males. The only exception to this pattern is inhalants, where both lifetime prevalence and past school year prevalence are higher among females than males (25 percent vs. 23 percent lifetime, 10 percent vs. 7 percent past school year).

Academic Performance

As with secondary students, fourth through sixth graders who make A's and B's are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs than those who make C's, D's or F's. Eighteen percent of elementary students making A's and B's said they used tobacco at least once during their lifetime, compared to 28 percent among those making C's or below.

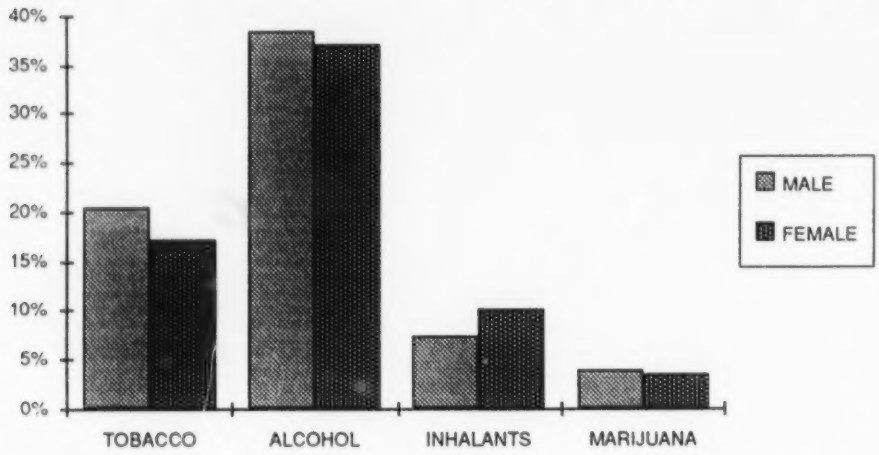


Fig 7 Past School Year Substance Use, Male and Female Sixth Graders, 1990

Alcohol prevalence was also lowest among A and B students (39 percent lifetime and 26 percent past school year), and increased substantially among students making C's and below (46 percent lifetime, 36 percent school year). Thirteen percent of elementary students with strong academic records said they had used inhalants during their lifetime and 2 percent had used marijuana. Among C, D, or F students, by contrast, lifetime inhalant prevalence was 21 percent and marijuana prevalence was 6 percent.

The difference in prevalence based on academic performance becomes even more pronounced among sixth graders (Figure 8). While sixth grade A and B students report lifetime marijuana prevalence of only 3 percent, the rate increases sharply to 13 percent among sixth graders making lower grades. The percentage of sixth grade students who have used tobacco during their lifetime increases from 27 percent for A and B students to 42 percent among students making lower grades. This pattern is consistent for inhalants and alcohol as well.

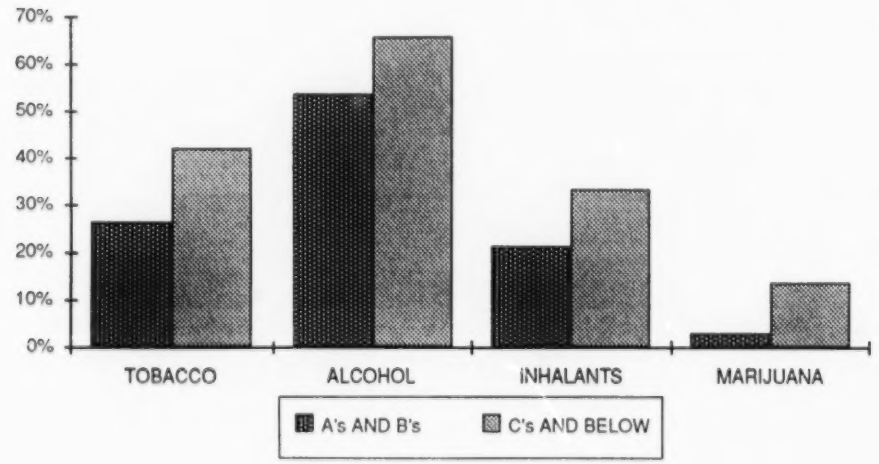
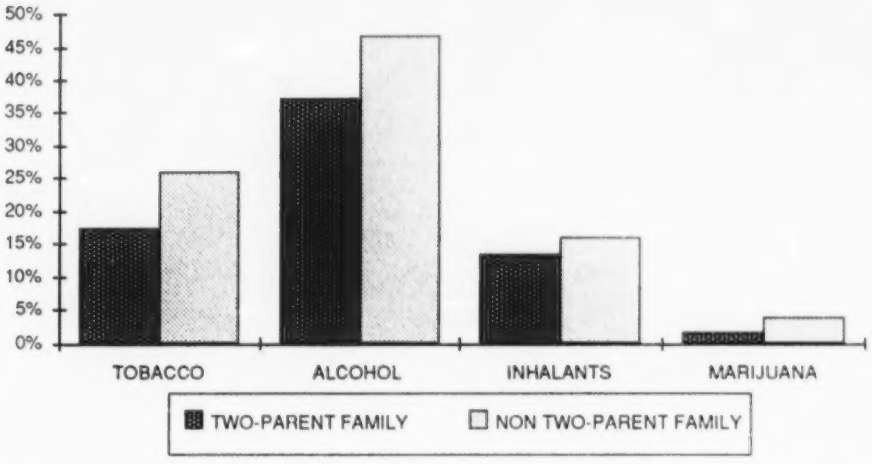


Fig 8 Lifetime Substance Use, Sixth Graders by Usual Grades Received, 1990

Family Structure

Students who do not live with both parents are inclined to use more drugs and alcohol than students who live with both parents. Lifetime prevalence rates for tobacco (17 percent), alcohol (37 percent), inhalants (14 percent) and marijuana (2 percent) were all lowest among students living in a two-parent home (Figure 9). Students in other family situations, by contrast, reported lifetime prevalence rates of 26 percent for tobacco, 47 percent for alcohol, 16 percent for inhalants, and 4 percent for marijuana. The same pattern was observed for past school year use.

Fig 9 Lifetime Substance Use, Elementary Students by Family Structure, 1990 (Grades 4 - 6)



Urbanicity

Tobacco use varies according to where students live in Texas. Elementary students living outside Texas' largest cities are more likely to use tobacco than those from Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, or San Antonio (Figure 10). Twenty-four percent of non-urban students have tried smokeless tobacco or cigarettes compared to only 18 percent of students from the largest cities. Prevalence of other substances are similar among urban and non-urban students. Forty-three percent of non-urban students have used alcohol compared to 40 percent of those in the largest cities. Among both urban and non-urban students, 14 to 15 percent have used inhalants and 3 percent have used marijuana during their lifetime. Differences in inhalant use are most pronounced among sixth graders; 22 percent of urban sixth graders tried inhalants at least once compared to 27 percent of those in other parts of the state.

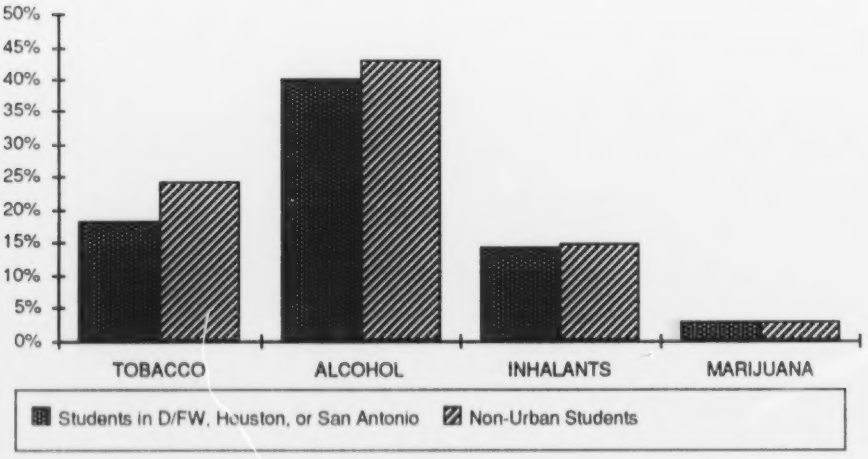


Fig 10 Lifetime Substance Use, Elementary Students by Urbanicity, 1990 (Grades 4 - 6)

DRUG-SPECIFIC PATTERNS OF PREVALENCE AND FREQUENCY OF USE

Drug and alcohol prevalence among elementary students seems quite low compared to secondary students. However, it is in the elementary grades that many students are exposed to drugs and alcohol for the first time. About 70 to 80 percent of fourth and fifth graders who had the opportunity to try alcohol actually did so. Over one-half of all sixth graders have already tried alcohol.

Tobacco

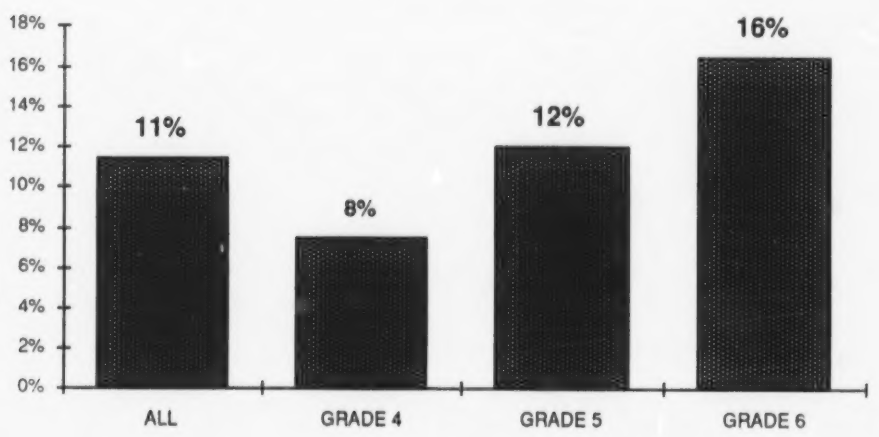
More elementary students (20 percent) have used tobacco than any substance except alcohol. Lifetime prevalence ranges from 13 percent among fourth graders, 20 percent among fifth graders, and 31 percent among sixth graders. Thirteen percent of elementary students used tobacco during the past school year (8 percent of fourth graders, 13 percent of fifth graders, and 19 percent of sixth graders).

Cigarette smoking is the most popular form of tobacco consumption. Eight percent of fourth graders, 12 percent of fifth graders, and 16 percent of sixth graders smoked cigarettes during the past school year (Figure 11). According to sixth graders, their average age of first use for tobacco was 10 years 4 months, earlier than for any other substance except alcohol (Figure 12).

Alcohol

The elementary survey findings indicate that for many students, drinking begins at a very early age. Thirty-one percent of fourth graders, 39 percent of fifth

Fig 11 Percentage of Elementary Students Who Smoked Cigarettes During the School Year, 1990



	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Tobacco	8.3	9.0	10.3
Alcohol (any type)	8.2	8.9	10.2
Beer	8.2	8.8	10.1
Wine/Wine Coolers	8.6	9.5	10.7
Liquor	8.7	9.4	10.6
Inhalants	8.6	9.6	10.4
Marijuana	8.3	9.2	10.7

Fig 12 Average Age of First Use of Selected Substances, In Years

graders, and 57 percent of sixth graders have drunk alcohol at least once. During the past school year, 21 percent of fourth graders, 28 percent of fifth graders, and 38 percent of sixth graders drank alcohol.

Sixth graders say they tried alcohol at a younger age than for any other substance (on average, at 10 years 2 months). Based on the average age of first use reported by sixth graders, beer is the first alcoholic beverage they try (10 years 1 months), then liquor (10 years 7 months), and then wine or wine coolers (10 years 8 months). Of those fourth graders who have tried alcohol, the average age of first use is 8 years 2 months; among fifth graders it is 8 years 11 months.

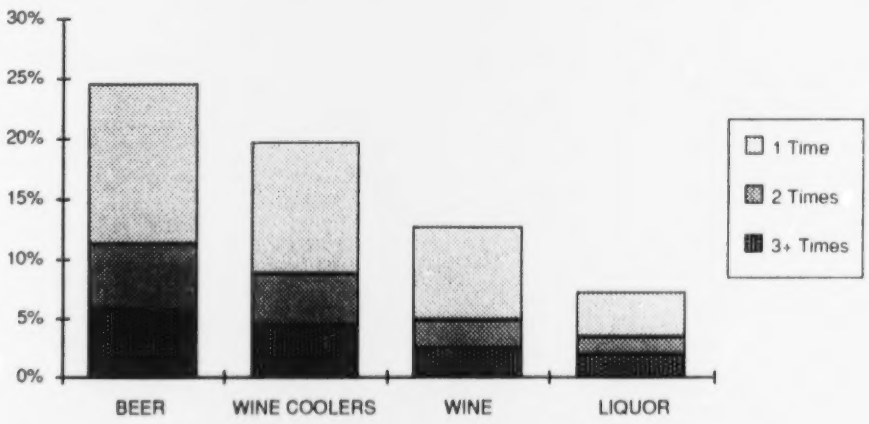
Not surprisingly, family situation is one of the strongest predictors of how soon students begin using alcohol. Those from a two-parent home showed a consistent inclination to wait longer before trying alcohol compared to their peers from other home environments. Seventeen percent of fourth and fifth graders from a two-parent home said they had used alcohol by eight years of age, compared to 22 percent among those from other types of home situations.

Frequency of Heavy Consumption

The Texas School Survey asked elementary students how many times during the past twelve months they had two or more drinks in a row. Beer is the most likely alcoholic beverage to be consumed heavily (Figure 13). About 25 percent of fourth and fifth graders had two or more beers in a row at least once during the past year. Of that group, 12 percent did so two or more times and 6 percent did so three or more times.

Wine coolers were the second most heavily consumed alcoholic drink. Twenty percent of all fourth and fifth graders had two or more wine coolers in a row at least once during the past year. Of those, 9 percent did so on two or more occasions and 4 percent did so three or more times. Wine and liquor were consumed in large quantities less often than beer or wine coolers. A much smaller percentage of fourth and fifth graders drank two or more glasses of wine (13 percent) or liquor (7 percent) during the past year. Of that group, only about 2 percent drank that amount of wine or liquor on three or more occasions.

Fig 13 Number of Times During Past School Year that Two or More Drinks Were Consumed in a Row, Grades 4 and 5 Combined, 1990



Inhalants

Many inhalants are readily available household products. Their ease of access and low cost make them an alluring alternative for young people experimenting with drugs. As was noted in the 1990 secondary survey report, inhalant use tends to be most prevalent among younger students. Among secondary students, seventh graders were four to five times more likely than high school seniors to report use of inhalants during the month prior to the survey. It is clear from the elementary survey data that inhalant use for some students begins at a very early age.

Nine percent of elementary students have sniffed glue; liquid paper and gasoline were used by about 6 percent of those surveyed (Figure 14). Paint thinner (3 percent) or other types of inhalants (4 percent) were used by smaller numbers of students.

Fig 14 Lifetime Use of Specific Inhalant Substances, Elementary Students, 1990

LIQUID PAPER	6.1%
Grade 4	4.5%
Grade 5	4.7%
Grade 6	10.5%
GASOLINE	5.7%
Grade 4	5.0%
Grade 5	4.4%
Grade 6	8.7%
GLUE	9.0%
Grade 4	9.2%
Grade 5	6.1%
Grade 6	13.3%
PAINT THINNER	3.4%
Grade 4	3.0%
Grade 5	2.3%
Grade 6	5.7%
OTHER	4.4%
Grade 4	3.9%
Grade 5	3.7%
Grade 6	6.2%

Students were also asked how many different kinds of inhalants they had used. Seven percent of respondents had used only one substance and 6 percent had experimented with up to three different substances. Only 1 percent reportedly used as many as four or five different types of inhalants (Figure 15). There are several difficulties in measuring inhalant use among students, which are discussed in detail in Appendix A of the full report 1990 Texas School Survey of Substance Abuse.

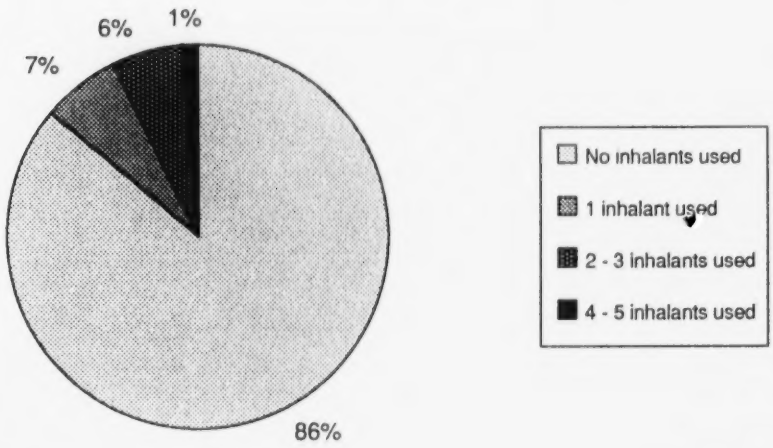


Fig 15 Number of Inhalant Substances Used by Elementary Students, 1990 (Grades 4 - 6)

Marijuana

Marijuana is the only illicit substance included in the elementary version of the Texas School Survey. Considering the relative difficulty of obtaining this substance, it is not surprising that marijuana prevalence is much lower in elementary than secondary grades. Only 2 percent of elementary students ever tried marijuana compared to 23 percent of secondary students. Most elementary student use is initiated in the sixth grade. Lifetime prevalence in sixth grade (5 percent) is substantially higher than that in earlier grades (1 percent in fourth grade; 2 percent in fifth grade).

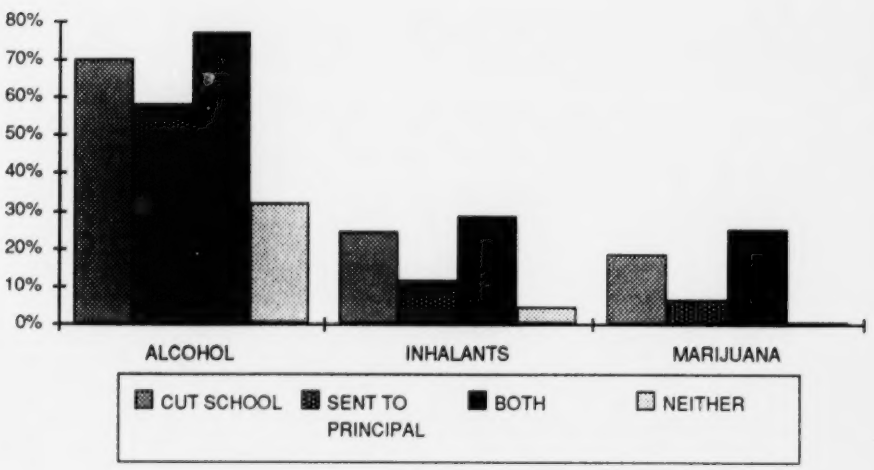
Only 2 percent of all elementary students surveyed used marijuana during the past school year, and most of this more recent use was among the older students. Four percent of sixth graders used marijuana since school began in September compared to only 1 percent of fourth or fifth graders.

Students try marijuana later than any other substances. Sixth grade marijuana users first used the substance at 10 years 8 months on average, which is the oldest age reported for any substance except wine coolers.

Behavior Problems Related to Substance Use

Students who have cut class and/or been sent to the principal are much more likely to have used drugs or alcohol than other students. Of those who say they cut school, 70 percent have drunk alcohol, 24 percent have used inhalants, and 19 percent have used marijuana (Figure 16). Lifetime prevalence was also high among students who had been sent to the principal at least once (58 percent for alcohol, 12 percent for inhalants, and 7 percent for marijuana). By contrast, students who had neither cut school nor been sent to the principal reported much lower use of all substances. Only 32 percent used alcohol, 5 percent used inhalants, and 1 percent used marijuana during their lifetime.

Fig 16 Lifetime Prevalence of Elementary Students by Absences and Disciplinary Actions, 1990



FACTORS WHICH MAY INFLUENCE SUBSTANCE USE

Opportunity to experiment is one significant factor which influences substance use among students. Two questions in the elementary version of the Texas School Survey asked about the availability of alcohol and other drugs to elementary students. The first question asked students whether they had ever been offered various substances. The second question asked which drugs their close friends use. In additional to availability, parental attitude is another factor which can seriously affect substance use behavior.

Availability

Because sixth graders were administered the secondary version of the Texas School Survey, only fourth and fifth grade students were asked what types of drugs or alcohol they had ever been offered. About 43 percent of these young students had been offered beer, wine, wine coolers, or liquor, and 9 percent had been offered marijuana (Figure 17). There is no doubt but that these percentages would be much higher if sixth grade data was available as well.

ALCOHOL	43.2%
Grade 4	39.9%
Grade 5	46.4%
MARIJUANA	8.9%
Grade 4	7.6%
Grade 5	10.1%

Fig 17 Percent of Students Who Have Been Offered Alcohol and Marijuana, 1990

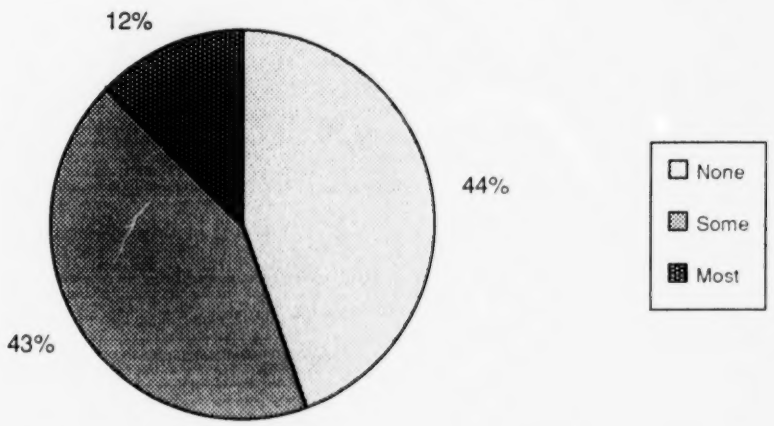
The refusal rate among fourth and fifth graders for marijuana is much higher than for other substances. About 16 percent of fourth or fifth graders offered marijuana go on to use it. By contrast, about 80 percent of fourth and fifth graders who have been offered alcohol actually have drunk alcohol. This finding indicates that students are more hesitant to become involved with marijuana, perhaps believing it is more dangerous than other substances.

Friends Who Use

Students were also asked about the substance use patterns of their close friends. Forty-four percent of elementary students said that their close friends used alcohol, which is a higher percentage than for any other substance. Over one-half of all sixth graders (55 percent) say some or most of their friends drink (Figure 18). Ten percent of elementary students surveyed (14 percent of sixth graders) have friends who use inhalants, and 9 percent (15 percent of sixth graders) say some or most of their friends use marijuana.

Peer use implies opportunity to experiment, and may indicate the level of peer pressure to use substances. Students may be inclined to deny their own substance use but be more forthright about their friends' drug use. Thus, peer prevalence reports can serve as a secondary index of personal prevalence.

Fig 18 "How Many of Your Close Friends Use Alcohol?" (Sixth Graders, 1990)



Parental Attitudes

A child's decision whether or not to use drugs can be influenced by their parents' attitudes about drug and alcohol use. The decisions of elementary students may be more strongly influenced by their parents' attitudes than those in secondary grades. Compared to secondary students, almost twice as many elementary students have no idea how their parents feel about kids their age using marijuana or alcohol. Among fourth through sixth graders, 18 percent are unsure of their parents' position about kids their age drinking beer and 12 percent do not know how parents feel about marijuana consumption (Figure 19). For secondary students these numbers are only 10 and 7 percent, respectively.

Fig 19 "How Do Your Parents Feel About Kids Your Age. . ."

	Don't Like It	Don't Care	Think It's OK	Don't Know
DRINKING BEER?				
ALL	77%	2%	2%	18%
Grade 4	79%	2%	2%	18%
Grade 5	79%	2%	1%	18%
Grade 6	73%	4%	4%	19%
SMOKING MARIJUANA?				
ALL	86%	1%	1%	12%
Grade 4	87%	1%	1%	12%
Grade 5	89%	1%	0%	9%
Grade 6	81%	1%	3%	15%

Sixth graders are the most uninformed about their parents' position on marijuana use, which may partially explain why a major upsurge of marijuana experimentation occurs in sixth grade. Fifteen percent of sixth graders, a higher percentage than in any other grade including secondary students, do not know how their parents feel about marijuana use. Sixth graders are also more likely to say their parents actually approve of kids their age using marijuana (3 percent of sixth graders versus less than 0.5 percent of fourth or fifth graders).

Seventy-seven percent of elementary students believe their parents strongly oppose their use of beer and 86 percent believe they feel that way about marijuana. The message that beer is more acceptable appears to grow stronger as students grow older. More sixth graders report their parents "think it's OK" to drink beer (4 percent) compared fifth graders (1 percent) or fourth graders (2 percent). This trend continues to develop in secondary grades as well.

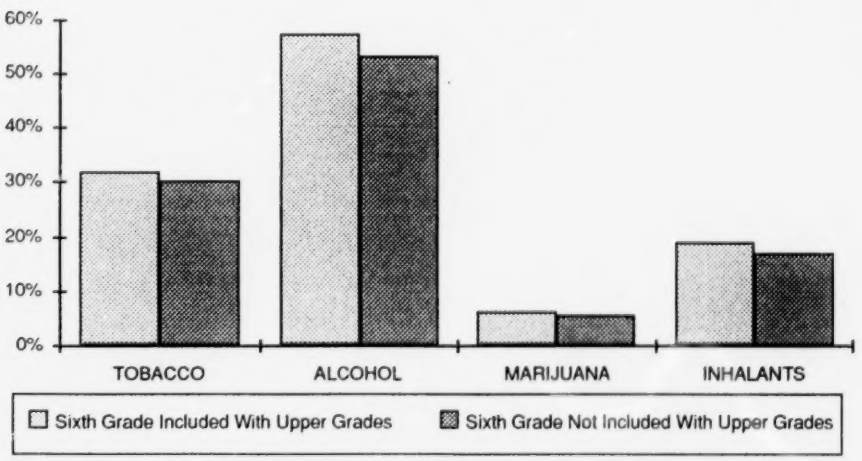


Fig 20 Lifetime Prevalence of Substance Use, Sixth Graders by Campus Configuration, 1990

Campus Configuration

Whether sixth graders are located in elementary campuses or secondary campuses slightly affects substance use. Prevalence is slightly higher among sixth graders who are on the same campus with students in seventh grade and above compared to sixth graders on an isolated campus or grouped with students in lower grades. Fifty-three percent of sixth graders on an elementary campus have ever drunk alcohol, compared to 57 percent of those on secondary campuses (Figure 20). A slightly higher percentage of sixth graders from secondary campuses have tried tobacco (32 percent vs. 30 percent), inhalants (19 percent vs. 17 percent) and marijuana (6 percent vs. 5 percent).

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Elementary students' early attitudes and opinions toward drug and alcohol use are affected by many different sources. Schools are in a position to be particularly influential in the decision processes of younger students. When asked whether they had received information about drugs or alcohol from a school source during the past school year, 95 percent of all elementary students said they had (Figure 21). That figure for secondary students was somewhat lower (87 percent).

Most fourth and fifth graders (88 percent) identified their teacher as their primary means of information about drugs and alcohol. Elementary students (including sixth graders) also named assembly programs (70 percent) and visitors to class (65 percent) as ways they had learned about the dangers of substance use. Forty-eight percent identified the guidance counselor as an information source and 55 percent said they had gotten information from some other school source as well.

Fig 21 "Since School Began in September, Have You Learned ABout Drugs or Alcohol From. . ."

	NO	YES
AN ASSEMBLY PROGRAM?		
ALL	30%	70%
Grade 4	30%	70%
Grade 5	25%	75%
Grade 6	36%	64%
A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR?		
ALL	52%	48%
Grade 4	50%	50%
Grade 5	49%	51%
Grade 6	59%	41%
VISITOR TO CLASS?		
ALL	35%	65%
Grade 4	38%	62%
Grade 5	28%	72%
Grade 6	41%	59%

	NO	YES
OTHER SCHOOL SOURCE?		
ALL	45%	55%
Grade 4	43%	57%
Grade 5	44%	56%
Grade 6	51%	49%
ANY SCHOOL SOURCE?		
ALL	5%	95%
Grade 4	4%	97%
Grade 5	2%	98%
Grade 6	10%	90%
YOUR TEACHER?		
ALL	12%	88%
Grade 4	12%	88%
Grade 5	13%	87%
Grade 6	**	**

** Not asked on secondary questionnaire

Reliance upon school-based sources of information is highest among fourth and fifth graders. However, the percentage of students obtaining information from school sources decreases sharply in the sixth grade, initiating a decline that continues throughout secondary school. Ninety percent of sixth graders got drug and alcohol information from a school source during the school year, compared to 97 percent of fourth and 98 percent of fifth graders. Similarly, only 64 percent of sixth grade students say they attended an assembly program about substance abuse during that time, fewer than in fourth (70 percent) or fifth grade (75 percent). This pattern is consistent for virtually all school-based sources of information. There are several possible explanations for this finding. Districts may be concentrating most of their attention on early prevention programs for fourth and fifth graders, with the number of drug and alcohol information programs actually decreasing somewhat in upper grade levels. This may be a questionable strategy in light of the fact that widespread experimentation seems to begin in sixth grade and increase with grade level. Alternatively, students may be less receptive to school programs as they grow older and may therefore not remember or report them on the survey.

APPENDIX: PREVALENCE TABLES

PREVALENCE: ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	20.1%	12.7%	7.4%	79.9%
Grade 4	13.3%	8.2%	5.2%	86.7%
Grade 5	19.8%	13.2%	6.6%	80.2%
Grade 6	30.5%	18.7%	11.8%	69.5%
ALCOHOL	40.2%	27.9%	12.3%	59.8%
Grade 4	31.0%	21.1%	10.0%	69.0%
Grade 5	38.5%	28.1%	10.4%	61.5%
Grade 6	56.5%	37.7%	18.8%	43.5%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	14.4%	4.8%	9.6%	85.6%
Grade 4	12.8%	3.4%	9.4%	87.2%
Grade 5	9.8%	3.8%	5.9%	90.2%
Grade 6	23.9%	8.4%	15.5%	76.1%
MARIJUANA	2.4%	1.6%	0.8%	97.6%
Grade 4	1.1%	0.7%	0.4%	98.9%
Grade 5	1.8%	1.3%	0.5%	98.2%
Grade 6	5.4%	3.6%	1.7%	94.6%

PREVALENCE: MALE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	25.8%	16.2%	9.6%	74.2%
Grade 4	18.8%	11.6%	7.2%	81.2%
Grade 5	26.5%	18.0%	8.5%	73.5%
Grade 6	35.0%	20.3%	14.7%	65.0%
ALCOHOL	46.2%	31.8%	14.4%	53.8%
Grade 4	37.6%	25.9%	11.7%	62.4%
Grade 5	45.3%	33.2%	12.1%	54.7%
Grade 6	60.6%	38.4%	22.2%	39.4%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	16.0%	5.2%	10.8%	84.0%
Grade 4	15.7%	4.0%	11.7%	84.3%
Grade 5	11.8%	5.2%	6.6%	88.2%
Grade 6	23.0%	6.9%	16.1%	77.0%
MARIJUANA	3.1%	2.0%	1.1%	96.9%
Grade 4	1.2%	0.8%	0.4%	98.8%
Grade 5	2.7%	2.0%	0.7%	97.3%
Grade 6	6.7%	3.8%	2.9%	93.3%

PREVALENCE: FEMALE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	14.6%	9.3%	5.4%	85.4%
Grade 4	8.1%	4.9%	3.3%	91.9%
Grade 5	13.2%	8.4%	4.8%	86.8%
Grade 6	26.4%	17.1%	9.3%	73.6%
ALCOHOL	34.4%	24.1%	10.3%	65.6%
Grade 4	24.8%	16.5%	8.3%	75.2%
Grade 5	31.9%	23.1%	8.7%	68.1%
Grade 6	52.8%	37.1%	15.7%	47.2%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	12.8%	4.4%	8.4%	87.2%
Grade 4	10.0%	2.9%	7.2%	90.0%
Grade 5	7.8%	2.5%	5.3%	92.2%
Grade 6	24.7%	9.7%	15.1%	75.3%
MARIJUANA	1.8%	1.3%	0.4%	98.2%
Grade 4	1.0%	0.5%	0.4%	99.0%
Grade 5	0.9%	0.7%	0.2%	99.1%
Grade 6	4.2%	3.5%	0.7%	95.8%

PREVALENCE: WHITE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	21.9%	13.2%	8.7%	78.1%
Grade 4	14.7%	8.9%	5.8%	85.3%
Grade 5	22.4%	14.1%	8.4%	77.6%
Grade 6	31.7%	18.3%	13.5%	68.3%
ALCOHOL	39.9%	26.6%	13.3%	60.1%
Grade 4	32.5%	20.7%	11.9%	67.5%
Grade 5	37.6%	26.6%	11.0%	62.4%
Grade 6	54.4%	35.5%	19.0%	45.6%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	12.1%	4.3%	7.8%	87.9%
Grade 4	11.2%	3.6%	7.6%	88.8%
Grade 5	7.6%	3.3%	4.2%	92.4%
Grade 6	20.4%	6.8%	13.6%	79.6%
MARIJUANA	2.0%	1.1%	0.8%	98.0%
Grade 4	0.9%	0.7%	0.2%	99.1%
Grade 5	1.5%	1.0%	0.5%	98.5%
Grade 6	4.3%	2.0%	2.3%	95.7%

PREVALENCE: BLACK ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	13.1%	7.4%	5.7%	86.9%
Grade 4	8.8%	3.7%	5.1%	91.2%
Grade 5	11.6%	8.0%	3.6%	88.4%
Grade 6	21.9%	12.1%	9.8%	78.1%
ALCOHOL	41.1%	27.2%	13.9%	58.9%
Grade 4	30.5%	19.6%	10.9%	69.5%
Grade 5	40.2%	29.2%	11.0%	59.8%
Grade 6	58.3%	35.3%	23.0%	41.7%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	15.8%	3.8%	12.0%	84.2%
Grade 4	14.6%	2.5%	12.1%	85.4%
Grade 5	11.3%	3.5%	7.8%	88.7%
Grade 6	24.5%	6.2%	18.3%	75.5%
MARIJUANA	1.5%	0.9%	0.5%	98.5%
Grade 4	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	99.5%
Grade 5	0.8%	0.6%	0.2%	99.2%
Grade 6	4.0%	2.9%	1.0%	96.0%

PREVALENCE: HISPANIC ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	21.7%	15.1%	6.6%	78.3%
Grade 4	13.7%	9.2%	4.5%	86.3%
Grade 5	20.0%	15.0%	5.0%	80.0%
Grade 6	36.1%	24.0%	12.1%	63.9%
ALCOHOL	41.0%	31.3%	9.7%	59.0%
Grade 4	29.6%	23.3%	6.3%	70.4%
Grade 5	39.6%	31.3%	8.3%	60.4%
Grade 6	60.0%	43.3%	16.8%	40.0%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	16.7%	5.6%	11.1%	83.5%
Grade 4	14.5%	3.7%	10.9%	85.5%
Grade 5	12.5%	4.8%	7.7%	87.5%
Grade 6	26.6%	9.8%	16.8%	73.4%
MARIJUANA	3.7%	2.8%	0.9%	96.3%
Grade 4	1.9%	1.1%	0.8%	98.1%
Grade 5	3.2%	2.7%	0.5%	96.8%
Grade 6	7.1%	5.3%	1.8%	92.9%

PREVALENCE: "A" AND "B" ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	17.7%	10.6%	7.1%	82.3%
Grade 4	12.1%	7.5%	4.6%	87.9%
Grade 5	17.5%	11.1%	6.5%	82.5%
Grade 6	26.5%	14.6%	11.9%	73.5%
ALCOHOL	38.7%	25.8%	13.0%	61.3%
Grade 4	30.3%	20.0%	10.2%	69.7%
Grade 5	37.2%	26.3%	11.0%	62.8%
Grade 6	53.7%	33.5%	20.2%	46.3%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	12.6%	4.3%	8.2%	87.4%
Grade 4	11.5%	3.3%	8.2%	88.5%
Grade 5	8.2%	3.2%	4.9%	91.8%
Grade 6	21.1%	7.7%	13.4%	78.9%
MARIJUANA	1.5%	1.0%	0.5%	98.5%
Grade 4	0.9%	0.5%	0.3%	99.1%
Grade 5	1.1%	0.9%	0.3%	98.9%
Grade 6	2.9%	1.8%	1.1%	97.1%

PREVALENCE: "C", "D", AND "F" ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	28.4%	20.9%	7.6%	71.6%
Grade 4	18.6%	12.3%	6.3%	81.4%
Grade 5	29.1%	21.9%	7.2%	70.9%
Grade 6	42.0%	32.0%	10.0%	58.0%
ALCOHOL	46.0%	36.1%	9.9%	54.0%
Grade 4	35.6%	26.8%	8.7%	64.4%
Grade 5	43.3%	35.1%	8.2%	56.7%
Grade 6	65.7%	51.5%	14.2%	34.3%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	21.4%	6.4%	14.9%	78.6%
Grade 4	18.9%	4.0%	14.9%	81.1%
Grade 5	16.3%	6.1%	10.2%	83.7%
Grade 6	33.0%	10.6%	22.4%	67.0%
MARIJUANA	6.1%	4.2%	1.9%	93.9%
Grade 4	2.5%	1.5%	1.0%	97.5%
Grade 5	4.9%	3.6%	1.3%	95.1%
Grade 6	13.4%	9.3%	4.0%	86.6%

PREVALENCE: TWO-PARENT FAMILY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	17.4%	11.0%	6.5%	82.6%
Grade 4	11.6%	7.3%	4.3%	88.4%
Grade 5	17.1%	11.5%	5.6%	82.9%
Grade 6	26.7%	15.7%	11.0%	73.3%
ALCOHOL	37.2%	25.4%	11.8%	62.8%
Grade 4	28.9%	19.3%	9.6%	71.1%
Grade 5	35.6%	26.0%	9.6%	64.4%
Grade 6	52.2%	33.6%	18.6%	47.8%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	13.5%	4.4%	9.1%	86.5%
Grade 4	12.9%	3.5%	9.4%	87.1%
Grade 5	8.8%	3.2%	5.6%	91.2%
Grade 6	21.9%	7.5%	14.3%	78.1%
MARIJUANA	1.6%	1.1%	0.5%	98.4%
Grade 4	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	99.2%
Grade 5	1.4%	1.0%	0.4%	98.6%
Grade 6	3.3%	2.3%	1.0%	96.7%

PREVALENCE: NON TWO-PARENT FAMILY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, 1990

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	25.9%	16.3%	9.6%	74.1%
Grade 4	17.9%	10.5%	7.4%	82.1%
Grade 5	26.2%	17.1%	9.1%	73.8%
Grade 6	37.2%	23.7%	13.5%	62.8%
ALCOHOL	46.6%	33.2%	13.5%	53.4%
Grade 4	36.5%	25.5%	11.0%	63.5%
Grade 5	45.3%	33.1%	12.2%	54.7%
Grade 6	63.8%	44.7%	19.2%	36.2%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	16.1%	5.5%	10.5%	83.9%
Grade 4	12.4%	3.1%	9.3%	87.6%
Grade 5	12.1%	5.3%	6.8%	87.9%
Grade 6	27.7%	9.5%	18.1%	72.3%
MARIJUANA	3.9%	2.6%	1.3%	96.1%
Grade 4	1.7%	1.0%	0.7%	98.3%
Grade 5	2.9%	2.2%	0.6%	97.1%
Grade 6	8.9%	5.7%	3.2%	91.1%

PREVALENCE: STUDENTS IN LARGEST URBAN AREAS
(D/FW, HOUSTON, SAN ANTONIO)

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	18.3%	11.4%	6.8%	81.7%
Grade 4	11.4%	7.6%	3.9%	88.6%
Grade 5	17.1%	11.9%	5.2%	83.0%
Grade 6	27.3%	15.4%	11.9%	72.7%
ALCOHOL	39.9%	28.1%	11.8%	60.1%
Grade 4	28.6%	20.9%	7.7%	71.4%
Grade 5	36.7%	27.6%	9.1%	63.3%
Grade 6	56.4%	37.1%	19.3%	43.6%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	14.2%	4.4%	9.8%	85.8%
Grade 4	12.6%	2.8%	9.8%	87.4%
Grade 5	10.5%	4.0%	6.5%	89.5%
Grade 6	22.3%	7.4%	15.0%	77.7%
MARIJUANA	2.7%	1.8%	0.8%	97.3%
Grade 4	1.5%	1.0%	0.5%	98.5%
Grade 5	1.9%	1.3%	0.6%	98.1%
Grade 6	4.9%	3.4%	1.5%	95.1%

PREVALENCE: STUDENTS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE STATE

	EVER USED	SCHOOL YEAR	NOT PAST YEAR	NEVER USED
TOBACCO	24.2%	15.6%	8.6%	75.8%
Grade 4	15.3%	8.8%	6.5%	84.7%
Grade 5	22.5%	14.5%	8.0%	77.5%
Grade 6	36.1%	24.4%	11.8%	63.9%
ALCOHOL	42.8%	29.1%	13.7%	57.2%
Grade 4	33.5%	21.3%	12.3%	66.5%
Grade 5	40.3%	28.7%	11.6%	59.7%
Grade 6	56.6%	38.7%	17.9%	43.4%
INHALANTS-ADJ.	14.8%	5.4%	9.4%	85.2%
Grade 4	12.9%	4.0%	9.0%	87.1%
Grade 5	9.0%	3.7%	5.3%	91.0%
Grade 6	26.7%	10.1%	16.6%	73.3%
MARIJUANA	2.8%	1.9%	0.9%	97.2%
Grade 4	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	99.3%
Grade 5	1.7%	1.4%	0.3%	98.3%
Grade 6	6.3%	4.1%	2.2%	93.7%